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No news is good news for CIA

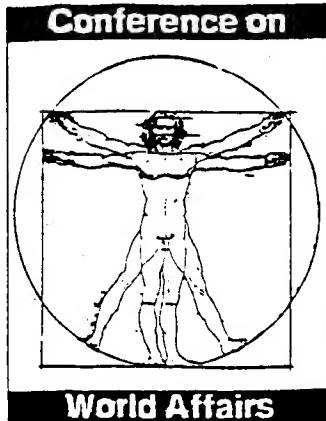
By BARRY BORTNICK
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BOULDER — No one is perfect, including the Central Intelligence Agency. But while CIA failures always grab headlines, the agency's successes never make news, and for Helen Boatner, that is just fine.

Boatner, director of the office of management planning and services for the CIA, spoke on CIA intelligence before an audience at the Conference on World Affairs Tuesday morning.

"Failure has many fathers, but success is an orphan," Boatner said. Failures get publicity, but success occurs when a bad event is prevented, she said.

While intelligence failures such as the fall of the Shah of Iran and the 1973 Arab-Israeli War are well documented in the public domain, successes, such as the agency's surveillance of Soviet weapons systems or pre-



dicting the Chinese would develop nuclear weapons, are not for public consumption, Boatner said.

In general, Boatner praised the agency for bringing good information despite working under public and political pressure. She

said intelligence gatherers often are put at odds with policy makers because their information can limit the choices a policy maker has, and does not provide certainty, which policy makers often demand.

To be effective, the CIA must have accurate, timely and objective information, Boatner said.

On a seminar discussing CIA failures, Newton "Scotty" Miler, a member of the CIA from 1947-1975, said the CIA can expect failures when its leaders become embroiled in policy making and have a biased interest in their policy rather than serve as intelligence gatherers.

Further, Miler said all intelligence agencies suffer failures because of enemy disinformation, or prejudice by a policy maker. Miler gave an example from World War II when Josef Stalin was told the Germans planned to invade Russia. But Stalin refused to believe the

news.

Both Miler and Boatner said the agency suffered in the 1970s because of reduced funding and a reliance on technical intelligence rather than direct human involvement in information gathering.

Commenting on one of the CIA's more noted failures, the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, Boatner said the agency had not investigated the possibility of Soviet missiles in Cuba, because all intelligence indicated the Soviets were not prepared for a major confrontation with the United States. "We reached the wrong judgment for solid reasons," Boatner said. "We looked at the condition of the Soviet military and said they were not prepared for a confrontation, and we were right."

"There is always room for improvement, but overall we are doing a good job for the country," Boatner said.